

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 IO-13 ACDA-12
OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 /097 W
-----087295 141932Z /46

R 141200Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5742
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1120

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MT, LY
SUBJECT: MALTA'S LIBYAN OPTION

REF: STATE 204506 (DTG 120111Z AUG 78), VALLETTA 02585
(DTG 101352Z AUG 78)

1. FROM TRIPOLI THE THREAT OF STEPPED UP LIBYAN MILITARY
SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH MALTA APPEARS LESS OMINOUS THAN
IT MIGHT FROM OTHER PERSPECTIVES. OF COURSE QADHAFI IS
ALWAYS READY TO USE HIS FINANCIAL ADVANTAGE TO TRY TO
ENHANCE LIBYA'S INFLUENCE AND PRESTIGE IN NEIGHBORING
COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY SMALLER ONES IN WHICH A MODEST
INVESTMENT CAN APPEAR TO MAKE A MAJOR IMPACT. WE EXPECT
HIM TO CONTINUE TO DO WHAT HE CAN TO INFLUENCE MALTA IN
THE DIRECTION OF NONALIGNMENT, WITH CURRENT EMPHASIS ON
REMOVAL OF BRITISH MILITARY PRESENCE THERE. IT IS
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UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT MALTESE ARE SO NAIVE AS TO
EXPECT LIBYA TO PROVIDE A STEADY, LONG TERM, INPUT OF
FUNDS FOR MALTESE DEVELOPMENT. HENCE, RELATIONSHIP
WILL PROBABLY REMAIN OPPORTUNISTIC ON BOTH SIDES,
WITH NEITHER MAKING LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO THE OTHER.

2. RE POSSIBILITY THAT LIBYANS MIGHT BE SOVIET

SURROGATE IN MALTA, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT QADHAFI TO
ACCEPT SUCH A ROLE. HE HAS COOPERATED WITH SOVIETS
WHERE INTERESTS HAVE BEEN PARALLEL, BUT HE IS NO
CASTRO READY TO SUBORDINATE LIBYAN AND ARAB VIEWS TO
THOSE OF SOVIETS. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT HIS
ACTIVITIES IN PURSUIT OF LIBYAN GOALS WILL NOT IN
SOME CASES SERVE SOVIET INTERESTS. WE BELIEVE,
HOWEVER, THAT HE IS SERIOUSLY COMMITTED TO NONALIGNMENT,
AS ILLUSTRATED BY HIS RECENT OPENING TO CHINA, AND WILL
RESIST SOVIET AS WELL AS U.S. HEGEMONY IN NEIGHBORING
COUNTRIES.
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